

IN THE ABSTRACT

Replace the abstract originally provided on the cover sheet of the PCT application with the new abstract as follows: A new abstract numbered page 19 is enclosed for the last page of the application following the claims.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of providing fault protection of special purpose devices included in at least one communication network and performing respective functions, includes the steps of providing a set of general purpose devices adapted to be configured to perform the respective functions and in the presence of a faulty condition in any of the respective functions of the special purpose devices, applying at least one of the general purpose devices in performing the respective function exposed to the faulty condition. Preferably the general purpose devices are configured for resource sharing; resources needed to perform a respective function exposed to a faulty condition can thus be transferred to a general purpose device in the set from another general purpose device in the same set. The set of general purpose devices is preferably arranged as a distributed system.